

Published: Aug. 23, 2015, *Kokomo Tribune* [Page: A8]

http://www.kokomotribune.com/news/question-time-mandatory-lawn-mowing/article_b9b74c26-4860-11e5-881a-478bf013af07.html

Question Time: Mandatory lawn mowing?

Should neglecting your landscaping be considered illegal?

**By Rob Burgess
Kokomo Tribune**

[**Editor's note:** To participate in future queries, keep an eye on our Twitter and Facebook accounts.]

Though we here in the soaked Hoosier state don't have the same problem, homeowners in drought-stricken western states have let their lawns go brown and stopped mowing to save water. Some have even painted them or put in artificial grass. In some states, though, neglecting your lawn can mean a trip to the hoosegow.

"Most cases of homeowners brushing up against 'lawn enforcement' do not usually end in jail time, but [others] have ended up behind bars because of a landscaping issue," wrote Roman Mars in Slate on Thursday. "Rick Yoes of Grand Prairie, Texas, spent two days in jail for having an overgrown lawn, and Gerry Suttle, a 75-year-old former city council member of Riesel, Texas, had a warrant issued for her arrest until some neighborhood kids came by and mowed the lawn that she had been unable to take care of on her own."

So, we wanted to know: “Do you think this should be a crime? Why or why not?”

Your answers

“No. I think if you own your home you have a right to choose what the lawn looks like. These laws are a waste of money.” — **Sandy**

Rosemont McKinney

“Terrible waste of water.” — **Sean Webb**

“Why? Because of pests, vermin, and the shady characters that like to hide in overgrowth. So why not?” — **Betty Worthington**

Our answers

“If they won't cut their lawn, send a little old lady with a bad back and a rolling blade lawnmower from the '70s to cut it for them. If they can watch her cut their lawn without feeling guilty and stepping in, then throw them in jail and replace their lawn with AstroTurf.” — **Steve**

Mullen

“We've seen enough lawns, abandoned and with occupants in the buildings on the lot, that may as well be the tall grass that camouflages hunters on safari somewhere. These are eyesores. Not crimes that should be punishable by a jail sentence. Monetary fines, OK. Community service picking up trash and mowing grass? Sure. But throwing people in jail for, essentially, being lazy is a slippery slope.

How would you like to get hauled off to the slammer for taking a nap in a hammock when you could have been crossing off items on the old Honey Do list?” — **Quintin Harlan**

“No way. This should not be illegal. I’m not against others having well-groomed lawns, but if you’re on your own property and, for whatever reason, don’t feel like maintaining it, is jail time really the answer? Lawns are an outdated concept to begin with. As Mars points out in his article, lawns are left over from English gentry who wanted to show how much land they didn’t need to grow food. Again, I’m not saying you can’t have your own lawn if you want it, but we should be really planting gardens on our lands.” — **Rob Burgess**

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